



Abbey Grange Church of England High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108101
LEA Leeds
Inspection number 277906
Inspection dates 5 April 2006 to 6 April 2006
Reporting inspector Ms Susan Wareing HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Butcher Hill
School category	Voluntary aided		Leeds
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		West Yorkshire LS16 5EA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0113 2757877
Number on roll	1246	Fax number	0113 2754794
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Anne Wilson
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2000	Headteacher	Mr Alan Key

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 18	5 April 2006 - 6 April 2006	277906

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a larger than average mixed 11-18 comprehensive school with a sixth form of over two hundred students. As a voluntary aided school it draws students from a wide area, from a range of social and economic backgrounds. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is lower than average and slightly fewer than average students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also below average. The school has recently gained specialist humanities status.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school and inspectors agree with the school's evaluation of its effectiveness. Standards are high in the main school and the sixth form and students make good progress overall. Teaching is consistently good. Nevertheless, there is room for further improvement to enable all students to learn more independently. The curriculum is good with some outstanding features, notably the wide ranging study support and extra-curricular programmes. These make a valuable contribution to the students' levels of maturity and their high aspirations. The school's work on healthy lifestyles is very effective and has a particularly strong impact on students' eating habits. The headteacher and senior leaders provide good leadership and management and governors are fully involved in the school's planning for improvement. Systems for analysing the school's overall performance are robust. However, the monitoring of students' progress is not frequent enough to inform decisions made by senior staff about school improvement. Performance management arrangements are well linked to the improvement of teaching and learning, and subject and year leaders are held to account for the performance of their subjects and year groups. The school works in partnership with other local schools to offer support and share good practice. It has recently gained specialist humanities status and plans are in hand to enhance the curriculum in the humanities and extend the school's work in the community. All the key issues from the last inspection have been successfully addressed and the capacity for further improvement is good. The school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are good. Standards are above average and progress is good. More than half of the pupils from Year 11 stay into the sixth form, where they engage in a broad curriculum of academic courses leading to Advanced Supplementary (AS) and full Advanced Level (A level) examinations. These are augmented by a wide range of Vocational Certificate of Education (VCE) courses. Good collaborative arrangements with three local secondary schools enable students to study minority subjects. The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some outstanding features such as the level of intellectual challenge to students' thinking. The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. This is demonstrated in the close monitoring of the quality of courses. It is also reflected in the proportion of students who complete their sixth form education, in excess of 90% from Year 12 to 13. Students value the high quality care and guidance which they receive. The sixth form gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the progress of all students is more frequently monitored to inform decisions about whole school improvement.
- Ensure that all students have opportunities to develop and use independent learning skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good overall. Most students enter the school with above average standards. Standards by the end of Year 9 are above average and most students make good progress. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress. General certificate of secondary education (GCSE) results in 2005 were well above average, representing good overall progress for students. They performed best in English literature and least well in art and design. Boys achieved marginally better than girls in Years 10 and 11, and less able girls achieved least well. Over 90% of Year 11 students in 2005 progressed to further education or training.

Throughout the school, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress. The school sets challenging targets for its students and in 2005 in Years 10 and 11 these were achieved or exceeded. In Years 7 to 9 the school narrowly missed its targets, except in English, for the proportion of students achieving Level 5 or above. During the inspection, lesson observations and the scrutiny of students' work confirmed that the students are making good progress.

Standards of students entering the sixth form are above average. Although there is some variation between subjects, continuing high standards are reflected both in examination results and in the work seen by inspectors. Sixth formers make good progress.

The school has taken effective action to improve achievement at Key Stage 3 in the light of test results in 2005. This includes new appointments to the staff and sharper analysis of information about students' progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development is good. They value the way that their views are respected and appreciate how seriously any problems are taken and swiftly tackled. Attendance is above average and behaviour is very good. Students enjoy coming to school because of the strong relationships and positive climate for learning which the staff create. Vulnerable students achieve well. Well-planned and appropriate activities engage them in learning both in school and the wider community. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and its impact is seen in high levels of maturity and responsibility. Students show great sensitivity to others and have high aspirations. The school council provides a strong voice for students, giving them a good appreciation and understanding of the democratic process. Students' awareness and understanding of healthy lifestyles is exceptional because of the school's outstanding work on healthy eating and physical, emotional and mental development. Students' economic well-being is well developed through the school's work-related learning and personal, social and health education (PSHE) programmes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are consistently good in the main school and in the sixth form. The school's professional development programme has been effective in improving the quality of its teaching and learning and encouraging teachers to share good practice. Teachers' thorough planning and good subject knowledge prepare students well for their examinations and tests and ensure that they make good progress overall. The best sixth form lessons observed demanded intellectual rigour in students' thinking. Lessons generally include a variety of engaging tasks that involve pupils and make them think for themselves. The outstanding lessons seen during the inspection encouraged students to work more independently and evaluate the quality of their work thoroughly. The relationships between students and their teachers and students' attitudes to learning are very good. However, teachers do not always take sufficient advantage of this positive learning climate to provide students with really exciting lessons. In some lessons teachers' questions do not give pupils the opportunity to think carefully about their responses or answer at length.

Teachers assess students' progress well in lessons and students are encouraged to assess their own work and that of their peers. Students' work is regularly marked but the quality of feedback varies and does not always give students sufficient guidance about improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has an accurate view of the quality of its curriculum: it is good with some outstanding features. It is broad and balanced and well matched to students' needs. Choices for students in Years 10 and 11 include a good range of vocational GCSEs. All students now follow an appropriate course in information and communication technology (ICT). The curriculum has been further modified to allow a small number of students to follow an individual programme which includes work-related learning and college placements. Curriculum arrangements for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are tailored to their needs. The school's extensive and imaginative study support programme is outstanding. It is highly valued by students. It embraces a very rich programme of extra-curricular activities, judiciously arranged to promote both leisure and learning. Arrangements for teaching PSHE have been astutely changed so that staff develop specialisms within this subject and all students gain a recognised qualification. The school has well developed plans for its recently acquired specialist humanities status to enhance the curriculum further. In the sixth form the curriculum is broad and contains a wide range of academic courses leading to AS and full A Level examinations. These are augmented by a good range of advanced vocational courses. Collaborative arrangements with three local secondary schools enable students wishing to study minority subjects such as German and further mathematics to do so.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All students, including the most vulnerable, receive good care. Each student benefits from very good individual support, both for personal difficulties and study. Improvements in target setting and the introduction of review days for students ensure that students know what to do in order to improve. Target setting is particularly effective in the sixth form and has also shown a positive impact on students' performance in English. A good range of intervention programmes enable students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make very good progress. Child protection procedures are in place and procedures for vetting staff are verified by the local authority. Good careers advice means that well considered option choices lead to good outcomes overall

in Year 11 and for sixth form students.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and they promote good quality teaching, high standards and good achievement. The school's accurate self-assessment gives the headteacher a clear understanding of the school, which is shared by all who have leadership responsibilities. The school's development planning is good and involves all staff and governors. Most parents feel that the school takes effective steps to seek their views. The school's model of performance management is robust. Subject and year leaders are both supported and challenged by the process and the school has supported other local schools by sharing its practice in this area of work. Systems for evaluating the school's performance are effective. Although departments make good use of the data available to them there is scope for more frequent monitoring to inform decisions about whole school improvement. The school has successfully addressed all of the key issues from the last inspection and its capacity to improve further is good.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Following our visit to inspect your school we would like to tell you about the things we found out. We were delighted to meet such responsible, mature young people, who show such sensitivity to others both in school and in the community. You told us how much you enjoy coming to Abbey Grange because it is a good school which helps you to reach high standards and make good progress. That is why many of you choose to stay on into the sixth form where your standards and progress are also good. Teachers offer you good advice on further study and we found that the study support and the enrichment activities that you get through the Active Programme are outstanding. Teachers have worked hard to make sure that your lessons help you to learn effectively. Teaching is good and we saw some outstanding lessons that encouraged you to think for yourselves and discuss the quality of each other's work. We think that more lessons could be as exciting as these.

The school has made a lot of improvements since the last inspection. Accommodation has improved and now that Abbey Grange is going to be a Humanities College there are plans to improve it further. You all now have the chance to leave school with an ICT qualification and more vocational courses have been introduced so that you are better prepared for the world of work. We think that the school should now make sure that:

- all your lessons are as exciting and adventurous as the outstanding ones
- the headteacher and his senior leaders use all the information they have about your progress to tell you how well you are doing and what to do to improve further.

I would like to thank those of you who talked to the inspectors to let us know what you think of the school. We found this very helpful. I would like to wish you all every success for your future at Abbey Grange.